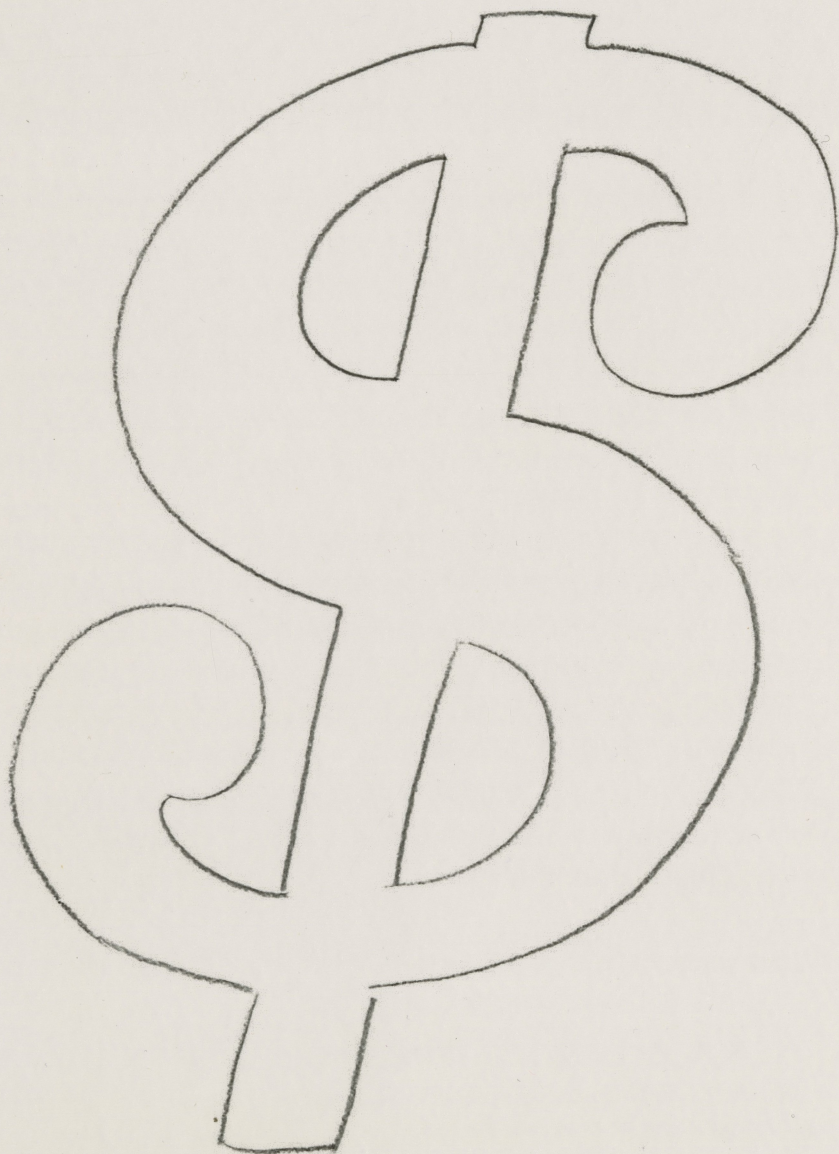


# FOLLOW THE MONEY

## ANDY WARHOL'S AMERICAN DREAM

I'll endorse with my name any of the following; clothing AC-DC, cigarettes small, tapes, sound equipment, ROCK N' ROLL RECORDS, anything, film, and film equipment, Food, Helium, Whips, MONEY!! love and kisses ANDY WARHOL, EL 5-9941. (1)





# ANDY

**Operating behind a distracting haze** of dizzy theatrics, Warhol produced art that made us take another look at things we had dismissed as iconic or banal. He paired simple images and basic techniques, he delivered visual snap, and he let loose a whiff of ambiguity. Why, for example, make greatly enlarged, multiple versions of a dull official portrait of communist dictator Chairman Mao? Having conjured up a subject (sometimes as a lone, possibly fragile entity, sometimes as a brash, thumping certainty), Warhol eschewed interpretation, leaving viewers to grapple with him, his work, and his subject.

There was always that truism about art asking the questions but not providing the answers. But he found no shelter there—some critics insisted upon holding him to a higher standard than that, because his ostensibly prankish, even punkish, public persona annoyed them. Warhol outran them all. Already in a landmark interview published in 1963, he remarked, “How can you say one [painting] style is better than another? You ought to be able to be an Abstract Expressionist next week, or a Pop artist, or a realist, without feeling you’ve given something up . . . I think it would be so great if more people took up silk screens [the way I have], so that no one would know whether my picture was mine or somebody else’s.”

**Andrew Warhola grew up** working class and Byzantine Catholic, the youngest son of immigrants who settled in Pittsburgh. In 1949, after graduating from the Carnegie Institute of Technology with a degree in pictorial design, he left home for New York City. He wasted no time pretending to be straight, took the name Andy Warhol, and blossomed as a commercial artist. Illustrations in *Harper’s Bazaar*, newspaper ads for I. Miller shoes, album covers for CBS Records, and window displays at Bonwit Teller brought him financial success.

For its 1956 exhibition *Recent Drawings U.S.A.*, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, borrowed a work from Warhol titled *Shoe*; when he offered it as a gift to MoMA, it was declined by the director. The incident probably fed Warhol’s desire to switch labels, from “commercial artist” to simply “artist.” With the Pop





Warhol took the Polaroid photo of Carolina Herrera during the session that marked the beginning of a potential portrait commission. Herrera, the fashion designer and entrepreneur who dressed Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the 1980s, impressed him with her stylish hauteur, and he showed her to be a subject worthy of Manet or Picasso. In 1979 the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, exhibited a decade of Warhol's portraits derived from Polaroid snapshots; the occasion drummed up new clients for him but drew only lukewarm critical responses.

The Polaroids of the two unidentified subjects feel prosaic when compared to that of Herrera, but they capture, nonetheless, that loaded moment when a sitter offers herself or himself up to the artist. And Warhol was no ordinary portraitist by this time but instead the media icon who, already in 1968, had unleashed the phrase, "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes."



*Trevor Fairbrother, guest curator*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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movement in ascendance on the international scene, Warhol decided to make some large paintings. For a spring Bonwit Teller window display in 1961, he installed some splashy, seemingly unfinished canvases of comic book characters and advertisements behind mannequins in floral print dresses. Soon thereafter his deadpan renderings of soup cans, Coca-Cola bottles, and diagrams from dance instruction booklets appeared in art gallery exhibitions, and late in 1962 MoMA accepted *Gold Marilyn Monroe* as the gift of Philip Johnson. This architect, a wealthy, Harvard-educated patrician, had longstanding professional ties to the museum; more discreet about his sexuality than the artist, he had the clout to get a splendid, decidedly camp Warhol painting into the collection.

At the age of thirty-five, in February 1964, Warhol placed a saucy three-line ad in New York's alternative weekly *The Village Voice*. He offered to "endorse with my name" a list of products that began with "clothing;" and ended with "MONEY!!." Warhol maneuvered his role as Pop art's joker/provocateur very shrewdly, and he ultimately expanded his creative sphere to include underground films, diverse publishing ventures, and collaborations with rock musicians Nico and The Velvet Underground.

**Warhol's life unfolded** as a rags-to-riches saga. Born and raised in slums, he owned a townhouse on the Upper East Side when he died. Throughout his career he worked every bit as hard as his industrious Slavic parents. Belief in the American Dream, a depression-era expression of hope in a "better, richer, and happier life," crested in him during his early years, as popular songs shaped his amiable side and filled his head with nuggets of optimism: "If I never have a cent I'll be rich as Rockefeller / Gold dust at my feet, on the sunny side of the street" (lyrics by Dorothy Fields, 1930). Sugary sentiment had its place in Warhol's repertoire; however, his core remained hard-bitten. He was not blind to the violence and brutality that permeate many American lives, and already in 1963 he made photo-based silkscreen paintings of car crashes, race riots in Alabama, and the electric





chair at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. Tipped off about the supposed obscenity of Warhol's film *Lonesome Cowboys*, the FBI opened a file on him in February 1968. Later that year, Warhol almost died when a performer in one of his films shot him in his studio. In 1985 he juxtaposed a signature gamut of his photographs and short texts in a book plainly titled *America*. Reflecting the tenor of that era, he introduced notes of blunt reality to undercut a seeming abundance of fun and prosperity. Precursors of Warhol's *America* include the picture-book exposés of WeeGee (*Naked City*, 1945) and Kenneth Anger (*Hollywood Babylon*, 1975).

So, while the American Dream appealed to Warhol, he, like a wise peasant, settled for a bittersweet one: you have to work, you deserve some fun, and you shouldn't get suckered. In his 1975 book *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, he put his twisted gloss on the old-school work ethic: "During the hippie era people put down the idea of business—they'd say, 'Money is bad,' and 'Working is bad,' but [I believe] making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art."

**The illustrations in this brochure** exemplify Warhol's artistic responses to the knotty relationships between power, money, celebrity, and American culture. Some speak for themselves: a dollar sign, a coin, and a rehabbed townhouse with a "For Sale" sign. The Indian head nickel (minted from 1913 to 1938) held potent childhood associations, both nostalgic and commercial, for the artist, in addition to being a mesmerizing example of graphic design.

After he was shot, portraiture assumed a major role in his work, in part because it provided a steady income. Substantial and brightly colored, his 1967 painting of Nelson A. Rockefeller anticipated this shift. Its subject, a rather liberal Republican, had been governor of New York since 1959 and a trustee of MoMA since 1932. Warhol depicted him at the podium, leaning into the media microphones; he clearly wanted the portrait to express vigor and immediacy rather than conventional charm. Rockefeller purchased four of these pictures, each strikingly different in its palette.





© ANDY WARHOL

## ILLUSTRATIONS

All works are by Andy Warhol (American, 1928–1987) and owned by the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, unless noted otherwise. *Dollar Sign*, *Indian Head Nickel*, and *Nelson Rockefeller* ©2010 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York

Front cover:

*Dollar Sign*, 1981, graphite on HMP paper; 31<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 23<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. Private collection

Advertisement, "Village Bulletin Board," *The Village Voice* (February 10, 1966), p. 2

Essay:

*Carolina Herrera*, November 1978, Polacolor ER, 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation; 2008.3.14

*Unidentified Woman [Short Curly Hair]*, February 1980, Polacolor ER, 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation; 2008.3.53

*Unidentified Man [Gray Plaid Jacket]*, October 1980, Polacolor ER, 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation; 2008.3.65

*Indian Head Nickel* (from the portfolio *Cowboys and Indians*), 1986, screenprint on Lenox Museum Board, 36<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 36<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College: PR.987.70.1

*Nelson Rockefeller*, 1967, synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen ink on canvas, 74 x 56 in. Collection of Mrs. Nelson A. Rockefeller.

Back cover:

*Brick Town Houses*, June 1982, gelatin silver print, 10 x 8 in. Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation; 2008.3.145

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